Reflections on Reflections:
Training in Counseling Psychology

Cal D. Stoltenberg
University of Oklahoma

The Major Contribution in the September issue of The Counseling Psychologist *provides several points to consider as the field defines the profession and training models for the 21st century. Calls for returning, in part, to our roots in career and vocational issues as well as our presence in the schools and recommendations for increased focus on children and adolescents should enable the retention of, and perhaps the increase in, our relevance in colleges of education. This reaction adds to this list a continued focus on personal adjustment and crucial attention to marriage and family issues, areas that can augment our institutional fit. Interpretations of survey data on outcomes of training models and racial-ethnic representation in our programs are offered. Little evidence exists to indicate advantages in moving counseling psychology away from its exclusive adherence to a scientist-professional training model. Our contributions to broad educational goals can positively impact our movement toward diverse and representative program faculty.*

One of the things I thoroughly enjoy about being a counseling psychologist is the opportunity to participate in our ongoing self-reflection as a field. The articles in the Major Contribution are timely and should serve the intent to "further thought and thoughtful action" (Neimeyer & Goodyear, 2005 [this issue], p. 608) within our academic training programs. In this brief reaction, I will not be able to applaud all of the meritorious observations and recommendations presented in these articles. Rather, I focus on certain issues and, to a degree, submit an alternative perspective.

Blustein, Goodyear, Perry, and Cypers (2005 [this issue]) present a detailed analysis and interpretation of the current status of training programs in counseling psychology. On the positive side, interest remains strong; the absolute number of programs has continued to increase over the years; and our graduates are finding work. However, we have lost programs at highly visible, quality institutions, and our proportional loss of programs is significantly higher than either clinical or school psychology. The sky is not falling, but clouds are on the horizon.

I thank Terry M. Pace for his comments on a draft of the manuscript. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Cal D. Stoltenberg, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Oklahoma, 820 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK 73019-2041; e-mail: cstoltenberg@ou.edu.

THE COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST, Vol. 33 No. 5, September 2005 683-691
DOI: 10.1177/0011000005278145

Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue]) are, in many ways, calling for our field to reconnect with traditional areas of focus. In addition, focusing more on "playing well with friends" is recommended. Both these suggestions are good and can help our programs achieve greater institutional fit, which should positively impact their stability and security in psychology departments and colleges of education.

With the overwhelming majority of programs located in colleges of education, Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue]) recommend we return to (or at least augment) our focus on career development and vocational psychology as these intersect well with educational issues and will increase the potential for collaboration with colleagues as well as service to the schools. I add that our traditional focus on developmental changes and personal adjustment issues are also directly relevant to research collaboration as well as consultation and intervention in the schools. If we ignore areas of mutual interest, as well as the different perspective we can add to these issues, we risk being marginalized in colleges of education or becoming strange bedfellows rather than collaborative partners.

So what types of changes are called for in our training programs? Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue]) suggest that we reconsider the primary focus on training students in the delivery of psychotherapeutic services. The curricula and practica can be modified, and better, more formal, ways to become involved in the schools can be established. I agree that adding a focus on public policy, children, and adolescents will enhance our training programs. Indeed, I cannot see how we can call ourselves generalist training programs *without* significant attention to understanding and intervening with children and adolescents, which necessitates additional focus on family issues, including marriage. However, I am not convinced that we must focus away from psychologically based interventions. Many difficulties encountered by our students and those of us who keep in contact with local school districts tie directly to adjustment problems of children and adolescents in school and, at the root, in the home (see Hughes & Cavell, 1999; McMahon & Estes, 1997).

This perspective is reflected, somewhat, in Blustein et al.'s (2005 [this issue]) discussion of Gysbers's (2002) recommendation that we become more involved and informed concerning school counseling and guidance programs. Note further that Coleman (2004) suggests that school counselors need our expertise in developing prevention and intervention programs. It is hard to imagine how we can do this without significant focus in our training programs on child and adolescent development (and assessment) as well as prevention and intervention that include knowledge of family dynamics (including blended families) and marital issues. In my interactions, school professionals appear to know little about these issues and are open to assistance.

While schools can be an excellent setting for practica, one must approach this option with caution. In my experience, the type of intensive supervision we provide in our training clinics and counseling centers is rarely available in the schools. We must always augment the supervision provided with faculty supervision (some on-site), or we risk experience without feedback and integration. Youth and family centers can be another source of practica experience relevant to the schools as many have contracts to provide mental health services within school systems. Again, though, careful attention must be paid to supervising this experience so that off-site discussions of "how did it go today?" do not constitute the majority of supervision and training.

While we are focusing on self-reflection, supervision is often considered a core area of counseling psychology (cf. Brown & Lent, 2000) and is referenced in the model training program (Murdock, Alcorn, Heesacker, & Stoltenberg, 1998). Nevertheless, how much are we supervising, and how well are we supervising? Romans, Boswell, Carlozzi, and Ferguson (1995) noted that counseling psychology programs are more likely to offer a course on supervision than clinical programs (80% vs. 19%, respectively) but are less likely to have an in-house clinic in which students can be supervised (46% vs. 81%, respectively), and the programs require fewer practicum hours (688 vs. 1,177, respectively). In addition, their study noted that the self-report mode of supervision was viewed as the least advantageous but was used most by school psychology training programs, likely because of the reliance on school settings for practica. Perhaps we should evaluate the effectiveness of our traditional approaches, in addition to considering new directions.

Building liaisons with other programs in colleges of education and with school professionals is important, which is consistent with our roots in personnel and guidance (Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000). Unfortunately, since the American Psychological Association rejected master's-level training, and the subsequent movement toward more affiliation with the American Counseling Association and its accrediting body of master's training programs, many counseling psychology programs are challenged to strike a balance between the two disciplines (see McPherson, Pisecco, Elman, Crosbie-Burnett, & Sayger, 2000, for discussion). Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue]) are correct in encouraging our faculty to become involved in local leadership by serving as administrators and in faculty governance. While paying close attention to the mission statements of our home institutions, I suggest that we become actively involved in shaping those mission statements. This involvement can only occur if we remain active players at the local level.

In addition to active participation in schools, local governance, and research relevant to educational settings, Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue])

note the increasing importance of external grants and contracts and suggest several resulting positives for our training programs. I largely agree, but one must also realize the downside. The more time we spend on grant-funded research and programs, the less time we commit to the broadly focused training of our students. I have seen this occur in other programs in colleges of education where faculty members are released from much of their teaching load to pursue grant-funded research. Adjuncts fill in, usually with less expertise and considerably less investment, and students can suffer.

Neimeyer, Saferstein, and Rice (2005 [this issue]) provide an initial empirical examination of the impact of the stated training model of counseling psychology programs on selected outcomes. They grouped programs, based on each program's own ratings (along a continuum of a focus on science to a focus on practice), into relative science-oriented, balanced science-practice, and practice-oriented. In the first of their two studies, they found that faculty in practice-oriented programs published less in professional or scientific journals than did faculty in science-oriented or science-practice programs. They also found students in science-oriented programs presented at workshops and conferences more often than did students in practice-oriented programs. No differences were found for a range of professional variables including involvement in delivery of professional services. Essentially, few differences emerged among programs with different professed training models. Study 2 reported conceptually similar results in finding no differences among training models in the likelihood of students successfully matching with an internship site or in the average ranking of internship placements. Differences emerged, however, in the settings where students from the three training model orientations were placed. The authors suggested these differences might reflect science-practice balance differences among these types of sites consistent with the relative focus on science or practice of the training program.

Neimeyer et al. (2005 [this issue]) conclude that the training model matters in that certain "faculty, student, and internship outcomes appear to covary as a function of the program's training emphasis in ways that may reflect the successful translation of program objectives into outcomes" (p. 649). Well, maybe. The differences were small and primarily related to a greater focus on science in the science-oriented and science-practice programs but there was not an increase in practice focus over the other two in the practice-oriented programs. Although the differences in internship matchings may reflect the practice focus of practice-oriented programs, it is equally likely that the differences may primarily reflect the desire for more of a science focus in their internship for students from programs adhering to the other two training models. Thus, one could suggest that the focus on science,

based on this limited data, does not negatively impact the focus on practice—hardly a resounding note of support for practitioner programs.

Neimeyer et al. (2005 [this issue]) carefully attended to the limitations of their studies, which were largely caused by limitations in the available data. We miss the point of integrating science and practice when we focus on publication and presentations at professional meetings as the sole indicators of scientific focus. In an earlier piece (Stoltenberg et al., 2000), some of us argued that "thinking scientifically is the most important part of this training and the mechanism that will have the greatest impact on one's professional competence" (p. 632). Exposing students to scientific faculty and practitioner field supervisors (in clinics, hospitals, or schools) is not effectively integrating science with practice. It is presenting two fairly distinct roles in different persons and expecting students to glean what is useful from each. I agree with Neimeyer et al. that broadening the definition and practice of science to make it more inclusive is important. How this makes more room for scholar-practitioner programs, however, escapes me. Broadening the definition of science does not lead to reducing its role but should lead to expanding its presence in our training programs.

The limitations of "clinical judgment" are well documented. In a recent meta-analysis of research on clinical versus statistical prediction, Grove, Zald, Lebow, Snitz, and Nelson (2000) note that a good formula equals or exceeds intuitive clinical prediction. The clinical scientist model of training actually minimizes the importance of clinical experience (McFall, 1991). Considerable evidence exists that practitioners are susceptible to the same heuristics and biases that negatively influence judgments by laypeople (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). However, if practitioners utilize a "more scientific attitude to clinical practice" (Westin & Weinberger, 2004, p. 603), which includes using systematic observations and normed instruments rather than intuition, they can avoid some of the pitfalls of biased clinical judgment.

Conversely, scientists are not immune from bias or, perhaps worse, irrelevance, if they remain divorced from practice. Meehl (1954) notes that clinical judgment is crucial in identifying relevant variables and framing research hypotheses. The experienced practitioner, in his view, is also good at interpreting and synthesizing imperfect data. Thus, science needs practice and practice needs science. Indeed, according to Cummings (1996), one original goal of the development of professional schools was to bring scientists and practitioners together. What happened is that practitioners took over, and there was little room for science.

In a summary that accurately describes what we can and should be doing in scientist-practitioner training, Westin and Weinberger (2004) note the following:

> From Hume (and later Kant) we learned that we cannot escape the subjectivity of the observer – that we will never see the world exactly as it is. From Bacon we learned that we must try anyway, and that scientific method is our best guide. From Freud (and later Kahneman and Tversky, Dawes, and others) we learned that our minds can play all kinds of tricks on us, and that systematic self-reflection, self-scrutiny, and knowledge about the biases to which we are prone are as essential for clinicians and scientists as for our patients. And from Meehl we learned that the scientific mind and the clinical mind can coexist, if ambivalently, in a single field—indeed, in a single person—and that the dialectic between the two may be essential for a scientific psychology. (p. 610)

I see this perspective as congruent with the one promoted by Stoltenberg et al. (2000) in support of scientist-practitioner training. I still find the 10 recommendations we made for scientist-practitioner training to be relevant and consistent with good training and practice. Of particular note, and relevance to the science-practice continuum discussed in Neimeyer et al. (2005 [this issue]), is our final recommendation in that article: "Core tenure track faculty should be personally involved in all aspects of and settings for training, including practica. We believe that faculty must be able to model integration of scientist-practitioner roles across settings (e.g., clinics, hospitals, labs, classrooms, offices, and conferences)" (p. 637).

Patton (2000) noted that the scholar-practitioner model is here to stay, so we should adapt to it. Conversely, for good reasons, the scientist-practitioner model remains the only training model recognized by the field of counseling psychology (Murdock et al., 1998). As noted by Neimeyer et al. (2005 [this issue]), the model may matter. It does, and we should stay with the model that offers the most to the field and our students.

Moradi and Neimeyer (2005 [this issue]) highlight another important issue for training programs by examining our progress in recruitment, retention, and promotion of racial-ethnic minority faculty. They note "a clear and consistent increase from approximately 7% (in 1981-1982) to 26% (in 2001-2003)" (p. 662) of racial-ethnic minority faculty in counseling psychology programs, based on data from the annual survey of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs. They note that this more closely approximates the general U.S. population. In terms of specific racial-ethnic minority groups, we seem to be doing well (at least, consistent with general U.S. population figures) in representing African American as well as Asian faculty members. Unfortunately, we lag in recruiting and retaining Hispanic faculty (although increases were noted), reflecting 6%-9% in counseling psychology programs compared with population estimates of around 13.5%. The status of other racial-minority groups is less clear as the survey groups these faculty members into an "other" category.

Important considerations for recruitment and retention were also addressed in the article, and these should prove helpful as our programs strive to achieve more diverse faculties. In certain areas, these challenges will remain difficult for some time. For example, only about 58% of Hispanics are high school graduates, in comparison with 90% for Whites, 87% for Asians, and 81% for African Americans (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2004). For college graduates the numbers are also disheartening, with 12% of Hispanics completing college compared with 49% Asian, 32% White, and 18% African American. Obviously, this impacts recruiting and retaining Hispanic faculty members.

Perhaps this is an area where our goals can truly intersect and impact one another. Blustein et al. (2005 [this issue]) call for more direct involvement in the schools and "the recruitment of psychologists who have both research and applied experience that visibly connect to the mission of schools of education" (p. 628). I would hope to include for most a focus on increasing graduation rates for all students, particularly racial-ethnic minority students whose graduation rates lag. Counseling psychologists are well suited for this challenge with our focus on diversity, development, career/vocational issues, and personal adjustment (Murdock et al., 1998). Add to this an increased focus on child and adolescent psychology (Blustein et al., 2005 [this issue]) and, as noted earlier, a focus on family and relationships, and we can significantly impact the educational process and, in turn, perhaps increase the pool of racial-ethnic minority potential faculty members to staff our programs, which will, in turn, positively impact our research and training.

In perusing the survey data (Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs Surveys of Doctoral Training Programs 1995-96 through 2002-03, n.d.), another problem appears to loom on the horizon or, perhaps, knock at our door. Although gender representation among full professors in counseling psychology programs still reflects an overrepresentation of males to females (68% to 31%, respectively, apparently with some rounding error, 2002-2003), balance has been reached for associate professors (47% to 53%, respectively) and is the mirror image of full professor percentages for assistant professors (38% to 61%, respectively, apparently with another rounding error). For students in our counseling psychology programs, the percentages are similar, with about 30% males and 68% females (some data are apparently still missing). This relative percentage has held rather constant for the past 5 years. Perhaps the time has arrived to examine the reasons behind this apparent imbalance in recruitment and admission of male students so that we do not once again experience nonrepresentative (relative to population figures) percentages of one gender in the field of counseling psychology.

In summary, these articles give much to consider as we continue to focus on the present and future of counseling psychology. Whether we return to our

roots or move in new directions (or some combination of both), we must reflect on what makes our field unique as well as what we share with other specialties in psychology. Hopefully, we can learn from our successes and mistakes, and those of psychology in general, to maintain a positive momentum for our students and clients and the discipline into the foreseeable future.

REFERENCES

Blustein, D. L., Goodyear, R. K., Perry, J. C., & Cypers, S. (2005). The shifting sands of counseling psychology programs' institutional contexts: An environmental scan and revitalizing strategies. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*, 610-634.

Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of counseling psychology* (3rd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Coleman, H.L.K. (2004). Toward a well-utilized partnership. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *32*, 216-224.

Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs Surveys of Doctoral Training Programs 1995-96 through 2002-03. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2005, from http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/ccptp/surveys.html

Cummings, N. (1996). Now we're facing the consequences. *The Scientist-Practitioner*, *6*, 9-13.

Grove, W. M., Zald, D. H., Lebow, B. S., Snitz, B. E., & Nelson, C. (2000). Clinical versus mechanical prediction: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Assessment*, *12*, 19-30.

Gysbers, N. C. (2002). So far, so good: Now what? *The Counseling Psychologist*, *30*, 757-762.

Heppner, P. P., Casas, J. M., Carter, J., & Stone, G. L. (2000). The maturation of counseling psychology: Multifaceted perspectives, 1978-1998. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling psychology* (pp. 3-49). New York: Wiley.

Hughes, J. N., & Cavell, T. A. (1999). School-based interventions for aggressive children: PrimeTime as a case in point. In S. W. Russ & T. H. Ollendick (Eds.), *Handbook of psychotherapies with children and families* (pp. 419-446). New York: Kluwer.

McFall, R. (1991). Manifesto for a science of clinical psychology. *The Clinical Psychologist*, *96*, 75-88.

McMahon, R. J., & Estes, A. M. (1997). Conduct problems. In E. J. Mash & L. G. Terdal (Eds.), *Assessment of childhood disorders* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford.

McPherson, R. H., Pisecco, S., Elman, N. S., Crosbie-Burnett, M., & Sayger, T. V. (2000). Counseling psychology's ambivalent relationship with master's-level training. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *28*, 687-700.

Meehl, P. E. (1954). *Clinical vs. statistical prediction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moradi, B., & Neimeyer, G. J. (2005). Diversity in the ivory white tower: A longitudinal look at faculty race/ethnicity in counseling psychology academic training programs. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*, 655-675.

Murdock, N. L., Alcorn, J., Heesacker, M., & Stoltenberg, C. D. (1998). Model training program in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *26*, 658-672.

Neimeyer, G. J., & Goodyear, R. K. (2005). Empirical reflections on academic training programs in counseling psychology: Contexts and commitments. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*, 605-609.

Neimeyer, G. J., Saferstein, J., & Rice, K.G. (2005). Does the model matter? The relationship between science-practice emphasis and outcomes in academic training programs in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*, 635-654.

Nisbett, R. E., & Ross, L. (1980). *Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Patton, M. J. (2000). A matter of good teaching. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *28*, 701-711.

Romans, J. S. C., Boswell, D. L., Carlozzi, A. F., & Ferguson, D. B. (1995). Training and supervision practices in clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *26*, 407-412.

Stoltenberg, C. D., Pace, T. M., Kashubeck-West, S., Biever, J. L., Patterson, T., & Welch, I. D. (2000). Scientist-practitioner versus practitioner-scholar. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *28*, 622-640.

U.S. Census Bureau News. (2004). *College degree nearly doubles annual earnings, Census Bureau reports*. Retrieved April 22, 2005, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/education/004214.html

Westin, D., & Weinberger, J. (2004). When clinical description becomes statistical prediction. *American Psychologist*, *59*, 595-613.